

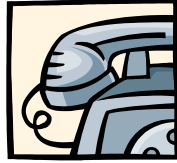
Off Base Housing Brochure

On behalf of the Family Housing Management Office, welcome to Misawa Air Base Japan! We are here to serve you and your family's housing needs. Our counselors are available by appointment to provide you with assistance in securing housing in the local area and to help answer questions unique to Japan and our Misawa Community.

The information contained within this brochure will help you understand the policies, guidelines and standards for living in the local community. Most importantly, it will help make your stay as comfortable, safe and pleasant as possible. We urge you to read this material thoroughly.

If you have any questions or need additional clarification regarding this information, please feel free to stop by the Housing Office for a visit or call us at 226-3200.

ROGER J. FOX
Housing Flight Chief
35th Civil Engineer Squadron



QUICK REFERENCE PHONE NUMBERS



Misawa AB Base Operator,53-5181, wait for dial tone and then dial your 226-extension

Fire Dept/Security Forces/Ambulance (Emergencies Only) 53-1911



Security Forces Law Enforcement Desk (Non-emergencies) 226-4358



Maintenance for your house..... Your agent or landlord

Traffic Management Office 226-3525

Furnishings Management Office 226-3565



Hospital Appointment Desk226-6111

Hospital Emergency Room 226-6647

Housing Office 226-3200

Veterinary Services 226-4502

Youth Center 226-3220

Teen Center 226-2170

Family Support Center 226-4735

Chapel 226-4630

DoDDs School Bus Office 226-9119

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SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

HOUSING REFERRAL SECTION: Misawa Air Base's Housing Referral Service is a part of the Housing Office, assisting all employees working at Misawa AB to find suitable non-discriminatory rental housing in the local commuting area. All Department of Defense (DoD) employees accompanied or unaccompanied must report to the Housing Office before entering into any rental, lease, or purchase agreement for off-base housing. The requirement to report first to the Housing Office is important, primarily to protect you against discrimination and ensure you understand your rights and obligations when living in the local community. Should you ever come across any sign of an individual owner or rental agent discriminating in any way, report it with full details to the Housing Office immediately for investigation.

LOCAL COMMUNITY LIVING: Living in private rental housing in Japan is quite different from living in rental housing in the United States. Standards of construction vary depending on the age of the house you choose to rent. There is normally less living space in Japanese houses; bedrooms are smaller, heating systems use kerosene and everyone cooks with a propane gas stove. The average American family living in the local community will have to make some adjustments, but the rewards associated with residing with our Host Nation are priceless.

Houses range in size and price, and it is best if you are familiar with your total entitlements package before you sign a lease for a house you might not be able to afford. Of over 1300 houses listed with our Housing Office, less than 20 units are greater than 6 kilometers from Misawa Air Base's two primary entrances. Over the past 5 years, over 700 new houses have been constructed and many meet or exceed American expectations. New housing is under construction everyday providing only the best living accommodations for base employees. However, most Americans are used to a big yard, storage space and ample parking. These housing amenities are usually not available here in Japan.

Misawa City Office is responsible for snow removal for the roads, streets and alleys. Privately owned areas, driveways, etc. are excluded. **DO NOT** park your car overnight in the alleys. During big snowfalls, snowplow teams start snow removal operations in the early morning hours, but they will not plow the entire alley where cars are parked.

Basic rental rates range as little as 60,000 Yen/month to as high as 200,000+ Yen/month. Your utilities are additional expenditures you must be able to cover. Your rent will be paid in Yen and by the first of the month. Late charges will be assessed accordingly and addressed in your lease agreement.

Many landlords will not accept pets. Those that do, normally charge an additional non-refundable deposit of 50,000 Yen.

If you have a waterbed, be sure to bring this to the attention of the counselor and landlord to ensure you are allowed to install the furniture in the house you are about to rent. The reason

for this notification is some rental units may not be structurally strong enough to support the weight of a waterbed.

AVAILABLE RENTAL HOUSING: There are two different categories of rental houses in the local Misawa community, those inspected and listed through the Housing Office, and those privately listed through a Real Estate Agent, better known as “P” housing.

- a. When a rental house has been inspected and approved for listing through the Housing Office, the renter receives full support pertaining to all issues relating to the house. See Section B for eligibility of service.
- b. When an individual enters into a lease agreement with a landlord/agent on a rental house that has not been inspected or approved by the Housing Office, this transaction is accomplished at the renter’s own risk. The Housing Office will only provide basic lease agreement service to the customer. The house will then be given a “P” designation category; this is because the landlord/agent did not agree to the minimum standards set forth by the Air Force to list the house.

RESERVING HOUSES: There are some things here in Japan that differ significantly from other areas where you may have previously lived. All housing units listed with the Housing Office have been inspected to ensure they meet the minimum standards set forth by the Air Force. The house units are made available for customers to reserve through the Housing Office. Individuals are allowed to reserve a house up to 24 hours to make a final decision whether or not to sign a lease. Military members receiving Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA) are allowed a two turn down option before their TLA is stopped. This process is to ensure military members receiving TLA are actively seeking all possible available housing suitable to their families needs. Civilian members on official orders receiving Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expense (TQSE) should contact their local Civilian Personnel Office for further information concerning their specific entitlements.

LEASES: The Housing Office has an approved rental lease written in both Japanese and English for ease when executing the lease agreement between you and your landlord. Our lease agreements are set at a minimum of six months. Individuals are cautioned NOT to sign a lease containing amendments to the contract unless they are fully aware of the contents. In addition, our lease agreement allows a member to terminate the agreement with proper notice, usually 30 days. Premature termination of lease agreements can place a legally enforceable and unnecessary financial burden on you. Contact the Housing Office if you need assistance.

All landlords require a security deposit, normally 50,000 Yen. Upon termination, this amount is normally refunded to you unless there are damages and/or bills owed on the house. Payment of these charges will be made and then any balance left of the security deposit will be refunded. The security deposit is paid at the time of signing of the lease and is not to be used as payment for your last month’s rent.

LIVING ALLOWANCES:

- a. **MILITARY:** Military members receive their normal Basic Housing Allowance (BAH), plus an Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA). JFTR, Chapter 9, states, “OHA is authorized to assist a member in defraying the excess housing costs incurred incident to assignment to a PDS location outside the United States.” Each military rank has a maximum rent allowance (BAH + OHA), plus a utilities allowance amount which is dependent on whether you are accompanied or unaccompanied. Your utility allowance is a flat rate, which may not cover your entire monthly utilities expenditures depending on your consumption rate. However, you must be able to cover the cost of all utilities when payments are due.
- b. **CIVILIANS:** DoD civilians on official orders receive a Living Quarters Allowance (LQA). Civilian LQA has a dollar ceiling cap based on pay grade and number of dependents residing with you. This ceiling includes rent and utilities, reimbursed dollar for dollar. Phone, cable TV, Internet service bills are also an additional expense to the renter, and these expenditures are not covered by any additional entitlement.
- c. **UTILITIES:** In addition to your monthly rental fee, you are responsible for paying your utilities and refuse collection. These expenditures can range from \$200 - \$500/month depending on the size of your house and how well you conserve. Phone, cable TV, Internet service bills are also an additional expense to the renter, and these expenditures are not covered by any additional entitlement. Military members having any left over utility allowances can use this money to defray these costs.
- d. Again, it is very important to check on your total entitlements package before you enter any lease agreement. Per a 3 Dec 03 memo from PACAF/CEPDH, members are not allowed to have their utilities included in their total monthly rent amount. OHA is intended to assist in defraying rental cost only. LQA is to defray rent and utility costs.

FURNISHINGS MANAGEMENT SUPPORT: Active duty military members, DoD civilians authorized LQA, Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) and Army Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) employees on official orders to Misawa AB are provided all major appliances, i.e. refrigerator, stove, washer and dryer. These can be kept for the duration of your stay in any rental house. Loaner items are delivered and installed free of charge by our Furnishings Management Office (FMO) located at building 1341, extension 226-3565. Retirees and contractors are not authorized FMO support. See Section F for additional information.

SCHOOL BUS SUPPORT: School bus routes are a big concern of parents with school age children. Bus routes are limited due to street size and ability to backup or turn corners safely. Be sure you check the bus route map or discuss this matter with the DoDDs Transportation Office, 226-9119 before you sign your lease.

SECTION B – OFF BASE HOUSING SERVICES

APPLICATION PROCESS: Application for off base family housing is arranged on a first come, first serve basis and we do not hold houses for incoming personnel.

ELIGIBILITY:

- All DoD, DoDDs, NAF and AAFES employees are authorized housing referral services.
- Contractors in direct support of Misawa AB also receive housing referral services, but on a more limited basis. Assistance is provided in reserving rental units and lease agreement mediation. However, no other support is provided.
- Pregnant dormitory residents may submit a request through the Dormitory Management Office to move to the local community no earlier than the 20th week of pregnancy.
 - o Request package must include a letter with the date of the event, endorsed by the requestor's commander and a letter from the local OB/GYN clinic indicating the estimated delivery date.
- Members getting married may apply for local community housing sixty days prior to marriage and may move off base 30 days prior to marriage.
 - o A letter with the date of the event endorsed/approved by his/her organization commander is required.
- Dormitory residents from time to time are released to make room for individuals junior in grade. Members must have a signed letter from their unit First Sgt or Commander indicating non-availability of dormitory space.

TURN DOWN OPTION:

- 35th MSG/CC TLA policy for military members is; members are allowed to turn down one reserved house without affecting their TLA payments. If a second reserved house is available and meets the basic needs of the family and you turn it down, your TLA will automatically stop at the end of 30-days.
 - o TLA extension requests for preference due to location, size of housing unit, "requirement" to be on school bus route, personal transportation, etc., are not accepted as a reason for not accepting an off base rental.
- For eligible civilian employees drawing TQSE, please consult with your local Civilian Personnel Office for details concerning your entitlement package.

RELOCATIONS: Once housed in the local community, you can look for another off-base house, but you will be required to first fulfill your lease agreement. Such moves are voluntary and at no expense to the government.

LEASE PROCEDURES: After receiving and accepting an offer, you will be given three copies of the blank lease agreement and an appointment with the landlord will be scheduled to complete the lease. You will also be given an inspection form to complete and return within seven (7) days of moving in. This form is for your protection against false claims for damages as well as to protect the landlord. Two copies of the lease must be returned to the housing office once you and the landlord have signed the lease. At this time, you can schedule furnishings delivery, complete financial documentation, and confirm a move-in date with the landlord.

SHARING HOUSES: Military members authorized to reside off base will be allowed to share houses provided each member is authorized to reside off base. The rent will be divided equally between the renters, with OHA/Utilities allowance adjusted accordingly.

INSPECTION PROCEDURES/STANDARDS: Each time a rental house greater than 15 years old is vacated, the unit is inspected a minimum of once a year by the Housing Office for cleanliness and to ensure the house is in good repair. Rental houses less than 15 years old will be inspected for the same a minimum of once every 3 years. This process will ensure the rental unit continues to meet the Air Force's standards. If an occupant identifies a discrepancy, the unit may require re-inspection by the Housing office to determine the presence of any problems and make a determination to continue listing the unit.

COMPLAINTS: You should bring complaints regarding the rental house or against the landlord to the housing office for mediation before the situation gets out-of-hand. The housing office can assist in resolving most issues if the complaint is filed early enough. The legal office can also be contacted to intervene. The housing office staff can only mediate complaints. We do not prosecute. You are encouraged to seek advice from the housing or legal office on options available to you.

PAYMENTS AND CURRENCY: Renters are responsible for paying the rent on time, using Japanese currency (Yen). Landlords will notify the housing office when rent is more than 15 days late, in order to enforce prompt payment.

SECTION C – OFF BASE UTILITIES/PHONE/GARBAGE/CABLE TV

GENERAL: Families residing in private rental housing should be conservative regarding utilities, as they are extremely expensive. However, there are no mandatory deposits required with any of the utility companies. Many older Japanese homes are not well insulated and very few are centrally heated. Small kerosene burning space heaters are used in most houses. If you think you are having a problem reading your bill or think you have been over charged, please stop by the Housing Office immediately for assistance. Please remember to save all of your receipts and bring them in with you for these two specific reasons; 1) adequate proof that a bill is paid and 2) each year the Travel and Per Diem Committee conducts an Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) survey. These receipts are needed for you to calculate actual payments for your housing expenses. Your OHA rate is determined by the amount you spend. We cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of keeping an accurate account of monies spent for living expenses. The accuracy or inaccuracy of the information submitted on the survey affects your OHA and utility allowances.

APPLYING FOR AND CANCELING: Electricity, water, propane and kerosene services companies will be contacted by your landlord/agent for the initial connection and cancellation.

GARBAGE: Private contractors will pickup your trash twice each week, directly outside your front door. Your landlord will provide containers for the disposal of your trash and garbage. DO NOT place your trash in the areas where the Japanese place their garbage, as these garbage pickup points are paid for through their city tax system. You will pay your agent/ landlord this fee along with the rent payment or pay directly to the contractor. This arrangement will be determined during the signing of your lease agreement.

CABLE TV: There are a variety of options available with several different packages to choose from, such as AAFES AFN Direct to Home, Satellite (Sky-Perfect) and Misawa City Cable (limited service). To subscribe to services offered by Misawa City, stop by the City Hall for more information. The Housing Office has information concerning Sky-Perfect.

COMPUTER INTERNET: There are a several options to choose from, but not all options are available to all renters. Options available are dial-up, ISDN, DSL, and BFLET. You can ask your housing referral counselor about more information concerning these Internet providers: NTT, Rent-A-Phone and Heronet.

ELECTRICITY: Tohoku Electric Power Company provides electrical utility services for the local area. They provide a computer-generated bill showing number of kilowatt-hours used monthly. Each month a company representative will leave the payment slip in the mailbox at your residence. Your electric bill can be paid at any convenience store. Normal business hours for the Tohoku Electric Power Company are Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 5:00 and Saturday, 8:30 – 12:00. Their business phone number is 53-3701 and English-speaking employees are available to assist you.

CONFIRMATION OF DELIVERY

ACTUAL BILL

**SAMPLE BILLS AVAILABLE IN HARD
COPY OF THE BROCHURE**

PROPANE/KEROSENE: A company representative will set up a payment collection time and date for this service at your doorstep.

Propane is commonly used to cook with. Propane is delivered directly to your house based on your monthly consumption and is stored in the gray cylinders on the outside wall of your kitchen.

Kerosene is commonly used to heat the water for showers, washing dishes and clothes, and to heat the house. Kerosene is delivered directly to your house based on your monthly consumption and is stored in the above ground fuel tank.

We do not recommend the use of portable space heaters when there is a heater installed in a room. If you choose to use a space heater, make sure you have adequate ventilation to avoid build-up of deadly carbon monoxide and are ready to take responsibility for any damages caused by the heater.

**SAMPLE BILLS AVAILABLE IN HARD
COPY OF THE BROCHURE**

WATER: There are two different water companies in Misawa and depending on the location of the house you rent will determine where you pay your water bill. Also, with two different water companies, there are two different rates assessed for water consumption. Water usages are charged monthly based on actual reading from April to November. December to March charges are estimated based on your November meter reading. The April meter reading will adjust your December to March water bill costs. This meter reading process is because reading a meter December through March may be difficult due to snow accumulation around your meter.

Misawa Water Supply customers pay their water bill at any off base Bank or Water Office.

Hachinohe Regional Water supply authority (Shimoda and Rokunohe area) customers pay their water bill at any off base Bank.

**SAMPLE BILLS AVAILABLE IN HARD
COPY OF THE BROCHURE**

TELEPHONE: Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT) provides domestic phone service throughout Japan. The landlord/agent is not required to install phone lines in houses. If you desire a phone at your residence, it will be at your expense. Phone lines can be purchased (if available) or leased. NTT charges a basic monthly residential fee per phone, plus a line and equipment fee. Add to that, the cost of actual calls placed and you have your bill. Bills must be paid at the NTT office located in downtown Misawa or at any Circle K or Lawson store. NTT Office hours are Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. and offices are closed on Japanese holidays. Additionally, there are also several cellular phone companies to choose from instead of a standard phone service in your home.

**SAMPLE BILLS AVAILABLE IN HARD
COPY OF THE BROCHURE**

SECTION D – RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR OFF BASE HOUSING

The following good reminders and helpful hints are to ensure a good tenant/agent/landlord relationship is maintained during your stay at Misawa. This will contribute to the continued enhancement of DoD personnel image in the local community. Remember, our actions as ambassadors reflect on all Americans. Be sure to set a good example for those who will follow in your footsteps to Misawa.

READ AND UNDERSTAND YOUR LEASE: Before signing a lease, YOU should read it carefully and be certain you understand all of the provisions. A lease is an official document from which legal problems can result, both from what is said or left unsaid. DO NOT accept verbal assurances on any subject/issue. Have the subject/issue clarified and written into the lease. Monetary liability issues can result from a lease that is unclear or misinterpreted by the tenant.

MOVING INTO YOUR NEW RESIDENCE: Before you sign your lease, take a few minutes to carefully inspect your rental unit. Make certain your new home meets your standards of cleanliness and good repair prior to moving in. Complaining about this after you have moved in and accepted the property serves no purpose. Most misunderstandings and possible future disagreements with your landlord are traceable to the lack of communication when you first agree to rent the property. To help avoid problems before they start, we strongly recommend you carefully inspect the rental unit and identify any items found damaged or in need of cleaning or repair. An Off-Base Housing Inventory and Condition Checklist is provided by the Housing Office for this purpose. Both tenant and landlord should keep a copy of this list for reference at the time you vacate the quarters. Don't be held responsible for damages caused by a previous tenant. Immediately following the signing of the lease, you will be required to pay the landlord your first month's rent and security deposit.

RENT PAYMENTS: Always pay your rent and utility bills before or by the due date. This is a good common courtesy practice to adopt.

GIVE REQUIRED NOTIFICATION WHEN VACATING: Leases for the local area are set at a minimum of six months. Particular attention should be paid to the requirements of the lease and always give your landlord a minimum of 30-days notice when you plan to vacate. This is a common courtesy you should extend to your landlord and is practiced worldwide.

THE MILITARY CLAUSE : This clause is not to be used to terminate your lease due to availability of government family housing. This clause protects you and allows lease termination ONLY if you receive official orders to relocate, i.e. PCS, separation or retirement.

DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY: Always take all necessary precautions to avoid damaging your rental property. When damage does occur, make sure your landlord knows immediately. If the landlord provides prior approval for you to make the repairs, great, but make sure you inform the landlord prior to commencing work. Before vacating the house/apartment, ensure the area is clean and in an undamaged condition. This should be

done even if it is not spelled out in the lease agreement. **NEVER** make repairs or alterations to your residence with out prior approval from your agent or landlord.

LEAVE OR TDY: If your house will be vacant for an extended period of time (more than 72 hours), we recommend you inform your agent or landlord of your plans. If it looks like your absence will be an extended one (more than 30-days), arrange for someone to make periodic checks on your home. Be sure to have someone pay your rent and utility bills while you are away. We also suggest you provide a point of contact to the Housing Office so we can contact him/her if a problem arises.

PETS: Not all rental units allow pets, so make sure you ask the landlord before you sign the lease agreement. Normally a non-refundable pet deposit is paid at the signing of the lease agreement. All pets must be micro chipped, have all current vaccinations and be registered with the Misawa AB Veterinary Clinic. Unless your pet is in a fenced area, all pets must be on a leash at all times when outside your residence. Pet owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets, whether in their yard, in the park or on the sidewalk. All pet owners must out-process through the clinic prior to their departure.

NOISE: All residents are entitled to a peaceful environment, especially where they reside. This includes your neighbors. Be considerate, do not play your stereo or TV excessively loud, or allow your dog to bark for extensive periods of time causing a disturbance in your neighborhood. Quiet hours for downtown are observed from 2300 to 0600.

HOME BUSINESS ENTERPRISES: Anyone interested in conducting a home business must first have permission. Please contact the Housing Office at 226-3200 or the Base Legal Office at 226-4022 for information regarding this Community Standards (35 FWI 36-2901) and Family Housing Management (AFI 32-6001) requirement.

INSURANCE: We highly recommend you purchase commercial renters insurance for protection in case of a major loss. You could be held liable for any damage to your unit, government-issued furnishings and appliances where damage was a result of willful misconduct or gross negligence of the renter, dependents or guests.

HOUSE TO HOUSE MOVES: If for some reason you decide to relocate from one rental unit to another, be advised, you are not entitled to a move at government expense. If you do decide to move, be sure to set up appointments with the Housing Office to terminate your first residence, and to accept and make OHA changes for your new residence.

SECTION E – FIRE REPORTING/PREVENTION

OFF-BASE EMERGENCY REPORTING PROCEDURES: Dial - 53-1911 and know what to do in advance in case of an emergency.

KITCHEN FIRE SAFETY:

- **#1: Never leave anything cooking on the stovetop unattended, not even for a minute. Avoid reusing oil since it ignites easier than new oil.**
- **#2: Do not leave plastic cooking utensils in pans while cooking.**
- **#3: Keep curtains or other flammables a sufficient distance from the stove or other types of cooking appliances.**
- **#4: Keep stove exhaust fans free of dust and grease accumulation.**
- **#5: Ensure you have a fire extinguisher handy and it is in good working order.**
- **#6: Have at least one smoke detector in your residence that you test monthly to ensure it works properly.**
- **#7: Remove lint from the clothes dryer lint trap after each load and periodically check the exterior vent to ensure it is not clogged with lint.**
- **#8: Learn not to burn, it really works!!!!**

SECTION F – FURNISHINGS

GOVERNMENT FURNISHINGS SUPPORT: Furnishings support is available through Furnishings Management Office (FMO), building 1341, extension 226-3565 to all eligible individuals on official orders assigned to Misawa AB, i.e. military, DoD civilians, NAF and AAFES employees. Effective 18 Apr 02, AFI 32-6004 no longer allows such support to contractors. Contact FMO for more details concerning your specific entitlements. If you move from one address to another in the local community and possess government furnishings, you must advise the FMO of your intentions and be advised the move is at your own expense.

FURNISHINGS ISSUED: Upon acceptance of your rental, you will be required to visit FMO to determine what support you will receive. At this appointment, FMO will schedule a day and time for your furniture/appliance delivery based on your move in date. A minimum of three days notice is required before delivery can be made. Furnishings are issued base on authorized needs, stock availability and support authorized by weight allowance on your PCS orders. One delivery and pickup is pre-approved for occupancy and termination. Additional delivery/pickups are at the expense of the customer.

QUANTITY AND CONDITION: At the time of delivery of your appliances or loaner furniture verify the quantity and condition of any items received and report any discrepancies immediately to FMO, 226-3565. Furthermore, contact FMO when furnishings become damaged or unserviceable. Any damages as a result of the member, his/her dependents or guests will be the sole responsibility of the member to make restitution.

FURNITURE LIFE SPAN: While the expected life span of most furniture items is 7-8 years; we do not exchange stock because of age alone. If items are serviceable, the intent of the program is the furniture will stay in place until such time the resident departs Misawa AB.